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The Church in the Smaller Asiatic Lands

A Study of the Catholic Church in Siam, British Malaya, Burma and French Indo-China

by
Rev. Gerard Marinan
Missionary of St. Columban

Volume 6, Number 1

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COMMUNISM
PERSECUTION
NATIVE CLERGY
JAPANESE INVASION
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The Church in the Smaller Asiatic Lands

A Study of the Catholic Church in Siam, British Malaya, Burma and French Indo-China

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1.
The Church in French Indo-China

1. Asia, the cradle of Christianity, has never, as a continent, accepted the Kingship of Christ. It is not that missionaries have been wanting, for, from time to time down through the Catholic centuries and especially in the last four hundred years, splendid efforts have been made to win this or that corner of the vast continent for Christ. The story of these missionaries is a thrilling one and it is true, of course, that their labors have been attended with a certain amount of success. But this success has been strictly limited. China, for instance, can look back on an apostolate which has lasted continuously since about 1583; can boast today of a hierarchy of its own and a numerous and competent native clergy. And yet only one Chinese in four hundred is a Catholic.

2. It is much the same with Japan; hers is a church founded by St. Francis Xavier, built up by men who can well be compared even to that great saint, and made glorious by a galaxy of martyrs. Still, in Japan only one out of every seven hundred is a Catholic; in fact, since the tragedy of Nagasaki, the proportion is probably less. What is true of China and Japan is true of Asia as a whole. Only the Philippine Islands, which can loosely be regarded as belonging to the Asiatic Continent, constitute a striking exception. Up to the end of the 19th century, when the Filipinos were robbed of their priests, these islands were as Catholic as the most Christian of European countries. But

second only to the Philippines, in its acceptance of Christ and Christian truth, is the territory known as French Indo-China to which Pope Pius XI gave the proud title: The Eldest Daughter of the Church in Asia. How the Church was founded there, through what vicissitudes it has passed, how it is faring in our own day and what the prospects for the future are, we shall try to describe in this paper.

Christian Beginnings

3. French Indo-China is neither a geographical nor an ethnological unit; its unity arises from the fact that it is an area in which French influence has long been paramount. It lies to the east and south of Siam and Burma; China bounds it on the north, and the rest of its coast line lies open to the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam.

4. The first attempt to preach Christianity in Indo-China was made by Dominicans and Franciscans about the years 1580-1585. In 1583 eight Spanish Franciscans from the Philippine Province landed in the harbor of Turon (Turane), on the eastern coast of Cochin-China. Holy Mass was celebrated on shore, and then they continued their journey to China. One of these Franciscans, Father Bartholomeo Ruiz, who was well versed in languages, returned to Cochin-China in 1584. He was well received by the King, built a church at the capital, Hue, and converted a considerable number of natives. He was succeeded in 1586 by Portuguese Franciscans.

5. The Jesuits came in 1615 and made some converts. But it was not until ten years later that the most famous of the Jesuit missionaries, Alexander de Rhodes, appeared on the scene. Father de Rhodes, we may mention in passing, was one of the most fascinating figures of his era; he seems to have preached the Gospel widely. Japan was really the mission to which he had been appointed, but the persecutions of the early 17th century made it impossible for him to enter that country. At the head of ten Jesuits, one of them a Japanese, he transferred his activities to Indo-China, and the little band of

missionaries found the natives well disposed for the reception of the Faith. De Rhodes, in order to satisfy their wishes, frequently had to preach to the people four times a day. Within a few years 6,000 pagans, including 200 bonzes, had been converted, and the success of the missionaries gave rise to the inevitable persecutions. It was only long afterwards, of course, that France obtained political power in the country and so the missionaries had to weather the storms as best they could. Father de Rhodes, captured and condemned to death in 1645, was in the end reprieved and his sentence was changed to banishment. His fellow-missionaries now decided to send him as their deputy to Europe in order that he might plead with the Pope, the General of the Jesuits and the Christian kings for help for the missions of the Far East.

Missionary Problems and their Solution

6. The journey to Europe, which now can be done by air in four or five days, took Father de Rhodes almost as many years and it was 1649 before he reached Rome. The Pope then reigning was Innocent X, and to him the missionary presented an address dealing with the position and the needs of the Far Eastern missions. The address was a notable one in that it's an important factor in the evolution of new missionary machinery for the Church. The address emphasized two things: the obstacle which the Portuguese *Padroado* or Right of Patronage placed in the way of missionary progress and the great need for native clergy and native bishops in pagan countries.

7. The first of these, the Portuguese *Padroado,* requires a word of explanation. Spain and Portugal, the countries most active in the discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries, were great Christian nations and, in the beginning at any rate, placed the spreading of the Catholic Faith in the forefront of their colonization program. It was, perhaps, inevitable that the colonizing authorities should gain some control over missionary activities, but this control developed to such an extent

that soon Spain and Portugal claimed and exercised almost more jurisdiction over the work of the missionaries than did the Holy See. The subject is too big for more than a passing reference here; suffice it to say that the *Padroado* was a major obstacle to the success of missionary enterprise, and that the eventual solution of the problem, to which we shall refer in a moment, seems to have first taken shape in the mind of Alexander de Rhodes.

8. The second main point of the address, the importance of a native clergy and a native hierarchy, did not greatly need any proof then, nor does it now.

9. The Pope listened with sympathy to the arguments of the missionary, and wished, indeed, to consecrate de Rhodes a bishop so that he could ordain native priests. The Jesuit, however, declined the honor and proceeded to France where he hoped to obtain men and money for the missions. His heart full of high hopes, but, optimist though he was, he could scarcely have realized for what great things God was using him as an instrument.

Pallu and the Missions Etrangeres

10. In Paris he came in contact with a fellow-Jesuit, Father Bagot, who was director of a pious association in which both clerics and laymen, all of them young, were joined together in order that they might live lives of work and prayer. To these earnest young people de Rhodes spoke of the problems of the missions, and listening to him was a young priest who was destined to revolutionize the missionary methods of the Church. His name was Francois Pallu.

11. Francois was deeply interested in all that Father de Rhodes had to say, and it is highly probable that the ideas which now began to develop in the mind of Pallu were inspired by the great Jesuit missionary. At any rate, within a few years, in 1657, we find him, accompanied by a companion, Pierre de la Motte-Lambert in Rome, endeavoring to procure

an audience with the Secretary of Propaganda. The Secretary, a Monsignor Alberici, was not at all anxious to see them, but the priests wore him down by their persistence and the audience was finally granted. What Pallu and his companion had brought to Rome and what they now proceeded to explain to the Secretary was a plan for combating the *Padroado*. Nobody, they pointed out, could deny that the Pope possessed the right to preach the Gospel in any part of the world without let or hindrance; equally, no one could deny that he could send his vicars in his stead. What Pallu and de la Motte-Lambert proposed was, in brief, this. Let the Pope send his Vicars all over the missionary world; let them be bishops so that they can ordain a native clergy; let them not, however, be bishops of the region for which they are working (for this would bring them under the disabilities involved in the *Padroado*), but of ancient Christian Sees no longer occupied.

12. This brief resume does not do justice to the arguments of the Frenchmen, but at any rate the Holy See was convinced by those arguments and in 1659 the three first Vicars Apostolic were appointed—Pallu, de la Motte-Lambert and a third priest whose name was Ignatius Cotolendi. To each of them was entrusted a territory in Indo-China. And so it was that this nation became the testing ground for a new system which has long become the normal thing in the missionary world. Before leaving for the East, however, the Vicars appointed some French priests to act as their agents, in the training of priests for the missions and in the collection of funds. So began the famous Paris Foreign Mission Society. It was, as far as the present writer knows, the first purely missionary society in the Church, and even the most casual acquaintance with missionary history makes it clear how splendid a part the members of this Society have played and are playing in the work of spreading the Gospel.

Years of Progress

13. The new Vicars set out from France sometime between 1660 and 1662, but it was at least a few years before they

reached their destinations. Fifteen years or more had now passed since Alexander de Rhodes had left Indo-China for Europe. How had the infant Church fared during that time? In 1644, the Spanish Franciscan, Father Antonio Caballero, well-known missionary of China, and a group of Spanish Poor Clares, while on a voyage from Macao to Manila, were driven by a storm into the harbor of Turon. The local mandarin sent them to the royal court at Hue; and the king received them kindly. He showed great respect to the nuns, whose modesty and edifying conduct made a deep impression on the people; and to the missionary he gave permission to preach the Gospel. Among the numerous persons who were baptized by Father Caballero was a bonze who belonged to the royal family. He took the name Stephen, and like his patron saint he was stoned to death by the pagans a few days after he was baptized.

14. From 1640 until 1658 there were only two priests and thirty catechists in Indo-China and yet from 6,000 of 1630 the number of Catholics had grown to 300,000. This was the promising situation when Pallu and de la Motte-Lambert (Cotolendi had died on the way) reached the end of their eastward journey, and it is a situation which provides a proud page in Jesuit missionary annals. A little later, in 1667, the Dominicans established themselves in Tonkin and from that time onwards Paris Foreign Missionaries, Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits continued to work side by side in Indo-China. Special mention should be made of the Spanish Franciscans, Fathers Geronimo and Jose, who by the year 1739 had baptized 13,000 persons. By about the year 1750 the Franciscans had built 37 churches and 58 chapels; and the neophytes in these missions numbered 16,260. Of interest in the history of mission theory is the work of four Fransicians who managed to get into Cochin-China in 1770 as physicians. They were priests who had studied medicine and surgery, and were able to act in the double role of missionaries and doctors. Their names were: Fathers Diego, Juan, Martin and Camillus, the latter serving as court physician. So great was their influence that they were able to persuade the king in 1774 to issue a

decree permitting the public preaching of the Gospel and granting freedom to captive Christians.

Persecution

15. For a period after the arrival of the Vicars and the Dominicans, the Church continued to prosper. But it could not last. The bonzes saw that as Christianity made progress, their own temples were becoming less frequented. Persecution was inevitable; towards the end of the 17th century it came, and when it came it came to stay.

16. In the beginnning it was not so very violent and many of the local rulers took it upon themselves to neglect the edicts issued by the rulers of Annam, but about 1750 the persecution became really intense. For the remainder of the 18th century it may be said never to have ceased. Sometimes it flared up and became violent; after a period it would relax until the advent of a cruel new ruler or some untoward incident again stirred up the smouldering flames of hate. Many of the missionaries suffered death for the Faith; many of them were deported, but their ships had hardly left sight of the shore when they contrived to find a way of returning to Indo-China. The native Christians proved themselves to be possessed of a similar courage. The record of these dark days appears to be far from complete, but it is certain that a very great number of neophytes suffered death bravely for the Faith. The story of the ending of the persecution is the story of the beginning of French intervention in Indo-China and it is to this that we must now turn.

The Tay Shon Rebellion

17. The kingdom of Annam had succeeded, between the 10th and 17th centuries, in imposing its rule on almost the whole of Indo-China. There were, however, occasional revolts against Annamite rule and about 1775 a serious rebellion broke out and developed into a civil war which lasted for a quarter of a century. This Tay Shon rebellion, as it was called,

inflicted a great deal of damage on the Church; turbulent times always do in missionary countries. During this civil war it happened that the Vicar Apostolic of Cochin China, a Frenchman named Pierre Joseph Pîgneaux, came into contact with an exiled prince, Nguyen, who was a fugitive from the Tay Shon rebels. This prince, it appears, had some claim to the Annamite throne, and Pigneaux offered to procure the French help which would restore him to his lost kingdom. Nguyen was glad to accept the offer and in 1787 an understanding was reached between Nguyen and France. French troops would restore him to his throne and in return France would receive the Port of Turan, the Island of Poulo Condore and would enjoy the exclusive privilege of trading with Cochin China. Actually, the French troops promised were not forthcoming when they were needed but Pierre Joseph Pigneaux was not a man to be thwarted in his plans by a trifle like that. He somehow managed to get twenty French officers and five hundred men from Pondicherry, and the fact that Nguyen, with this meagre help, was soon able to vanquish his enemies, is an illuminating commentary on the primitive methods of the warriors of Indo-China. In 1802, Nguyen became Emperor of Annam under the title of Gia Long; he was most favorably disposed towards the French to whom he owed his empire, and to the religion which they professed. And thus, at the beginning of the 19th century persecution came to an end—for the present at any rate.

18. At the time, no doubt, to a Church which was weary from a century of suffering, the action of Pigneaux must have seemed most opportune, and it is undeniable that it did bring about great advantages for Christianity. And yet, when we survey the situation from the vantage-point where the passing of over a hundred years places us, the facts force one to conclude that Pigneaux acted with the best of intentions, indeed, but in a highly imprudent way. For this was the beginning of French political influence in Indo-China; that the Church was intimately concerned in it was plain for all to see. And it was only natural that the majority of the natives should see in Christian-

ity only a facet of a foreign imperialism which threatened their independence. As the century grew older, French influence became progressively stronger, and the methods used to increase that influence were not always peaceful; all the time, too, France continued to act as the protector of the missionaries against violence from hostile natives. It is little wonder, then, that the pagans of Indo-China failed to draw the distinction between the Universal Church, possessed of no political ambitions, and the French nation which clearly had designs of conquest; little wonder that they came to regard the missionaries as emissaries of a foreign power, and converts to Christianity as traitors to their country. Herein, to a very large extent, is the explanation of the fact that, during the 19th century, persecution raged more fiercely than ever.

A Lull in the Storm

19. But that is to anticipate. The accession of Gia Long gave to the Church a breathing space which lasted up to his death in 1820 and indeed may be said to have continued up to about the year 1833. Catholicism flourished wonderfully during this period. A few figures dealing with the year 1819 will give us some idea of the position at that time. The sources at our disposal do not specify the total number of Christians, but it can be estimated roughly that there were then about 400,000 Catholics in Indo-China. Four Bishops guided the activities of over two hundred priests; only twenty-five of these were foreign, so that even then Indo-China was singularly advanced in the all-important matter of a native clergy. In addition to the priests there were a thousand catechists and fifteen hundred nuns—all, nearly all of them, belonging to the country.

Renewal of Persecution

20. Gia Long died in 1820 and was succeeded on the throne by his cruel and profligate son Minh-Mang who hated both the French and the Christians. In the early years of his reign, however, the Catholics were protected by the friendship

of the Viceroy of Cochin China, an old and trusted friend of Gia Long, but when this patron of the Christians died in 1832, Minh-Mang did not delay in showing his real attitude towards the foreigners and their religion. The year 1833 brought new edicts against priests and faithful; in the following years, further anti-Christian edicts were issued and soon persecution was even more fierce that it ever had been in the past. In fact, the persecution which began in 1833 and fully ended only fifty years later can be compared with the worst that the annals of Rome or Japan portray.

21. That there were occasional apostasies cannot be denied, but the shame of the few is insignificant in comparison with the glory of the hundreds of thousands who bore these tortures gladly rather than give up their Faith. And even of the few who did fail under torture, very many were seized with remorse, proclaimed that they still believed in the Catholic Faith and made a glorious reparation by offering themselves once more to the fury of the pagan persecutors.

The Dawn of Peace

22. In 1862 some relief came. Tu-duc, who ruled on the throne of Gia Long, was as barbarous a monarch as ever set himself to extirpate Christianity; a measure of his cruelty can be found in one of his edicts which ordered that native priests, if caught, be sawn in two. But at this time his rule was threatened by a revolution in Tonkin and he knew that if the French came to the aid of the rebels, his kingdom was doomed. For this reason he made a treaty with France in 1862 and one of its clauses guaranteed freedom of worship to Christians. This, in theory, should have meant the end of persecution and so it did in the south, in and near Cochin China which the treaty of 1862 had ceded to France. But in the north, French influence was less powerful and the Church was correspondingly exposed to continued attacks. A savage persecution, which broke out about 1872 or 1873, brought about a new treaty in 1874 which offered still further guarantees of tolera-

tion for Christianity. For eight years (1874-1882) the Church enjoyed a period of comparative peace, but in 1883, when the French engaged in a Military expedition in the more northerly part of Indo-China, the natives retaliated by embarking on still another ruthless persecution of the Christian religion. The French troops, however, gained victory after victory; a treaty, by which Annam became a protectorate of France, was signed in 1884 and ratified in 1886; this treaty marks the end of the era of persecution in Indo-China.

Years of Progress (1886-1942)

23. The Church now entered on an age of peace and prosperity such as it had scarcely ever known before. The hostility of the French administration, masonic and anti-clerical as it was, did much to retard, but still could not prevent, the growth of the Catholic fold. The fidelity of the Christians in time of stress had made a tremendous impression on many of the pagans and, as a result, when persecution ceased, conversions were much more numerous than ever before. Christian Brothers and nuns (Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres and Sisters of Providence) were there to found and manage the educational and charitable institutes necessary for a growing Christian community. Altogether, it was for the Church an era of unprecedented progress; between 1887 and 1910 the annual figure for conversions kept increasing until it reached about fifty thousand. In 1910 Indo-China could boast of almost a million Catholics, of 603 native priests, out of a clergy altogether numbering 1,046; of twenty-one seminaries with 1,775 students, of 109 convents with 3,122 Sisters—most of them natives of the country. For a mission that had only thirty years in which to recover from half a century of persecution, these figures are certainly impressive.

24. This progress continued steadily up to the Japanese invasion in 1942. By 1933, the total Catholic community had increased to 1,386,748, we have not been able to secure figures for the year 1942, but, since little progress was made (for reasons which we shall explain later) between 1942 and the present time, the statistics for 1946 can be taken as being closely approximate

to those of four years earlier. In 1946 the Catholic population stood at 1,564,180. For these same years the figures for native priests are 1,123 and 1,379 respectively. This high proportion of native priests has always been the outstanding mark of the Church in Indo-China. In fully Catholic countries there is, on an average, one priest to every thousand Catholics; this average has been reached in the country of which we write, and indeed the seminaries cannot accommodate all the boys who wish to study for the priesthood. Every Catholic family considers it a high honor to have one of its sons a priest and one of its daughters a nun. In eight major seminaries, 450 boys are preparing for the priesthood. Progress in the matter of a native episcopacy has not been quite so rapid, but nevertheless, a beginning has been made. In 1933 Indo-China received its first native bishop and since then three others have been appointed. Since the country contains eighteen ecclesiastical divisions—seventeen Vicariates and one Prefecture—the number of native Vicars and Prefects Apostolic is still small in proportion to the number of native priests. But it can scarcely be doubted that the leadership of the Church will become increasingly native in the years that lie ahead. The most thriving native sisterhood, known both as *Amantes de la Croix* and *Filles de Marie,* is nearly three hundred years old and at the present time comprises about three thousand nuns; the contemplative life is represented by one Trappist and four Carmelite foundations.

The Japanese Occupation (1942-1945)

25. Shortly after Japan's entry into the World War, Japanese troops occupied Indo-China. Since the greater part of the foreign missionary personnel was French, they were regarded with suspicion and hostility by the invading forces. The priests of many missions were arrested and imprisoned; later on they were brought to the larger centers, especially Hanoi, Vinh and Saigon, where they were subjected to a ceaseless vigilance. Many French Sisters, too, were forced to leave the orphanages and institutions in which they were working: it was fortunate that there were, in abundance, native Sisters to take their places. All

this, as one would expect, seriously disorganized missionary work. But in Indo-China, as in other parts of the East, the Japanese became really cruel only when it was clear that Japan was fighting a losing battle, and in 1945 two bishops, seven priests and a nun were put to death at their hands. Some of the victims were tortured before execution. Effective Japanese occupation came to an end with the Japanese surrender of August, 1945. But during their years in Indo-China, the occupying forces engaged in a great deal of propaganda directed against all European influence in Asia. The climax came in March, 1945 when the Japanese authorities formally abolished the French regime in Indo-China and set up the independent state of Viet-Nam.

26. Viet-Nam, incidentally, means "Country of the South," and is an old Chinese name for Indo-China. When the capitulation of Japan came in August of the same year, the native patriots staged a revolution against French control; in September, the Republic of Viet-Nam, under the presidency of Ho Chi-Minh, was set up and since then the new Republic has been engaged in a minor war with France.

The Fight for Independence

27. The Japanese occupation, it is true, hastened this outburst of nationalism, but the seeds of it have long been there. Ever since France obtained control of the country, a certain element of the population has resented her presence and power. In the years before and after the 1914-1918 war, many young natives of Indo-China were educated in Europe. When they returned to their native land they brought with them democratic ideas about the right of a country to govern itself, and spread these ideas among their fellow countrymen. Even in the early nineteen-twenties, a strong spirit of nationalism had taken hold of the country. But this spirit expressed itself in many different ways. To an extreme few, tainted even then with communistic principles learned in France, it meant the extermination of all French influence, by revolution if necessary. To others it meant mainly the destruction of the almost complete monopoly, which

in some parts of Indo-China the Chinese exercised with regard to trade. Still others visualized a gradual decrease of French power in proportion as natives of the country became capable of taking over responsibility; the question whether France would ultimately be ousted from the country was a matter for the far distant future and could be settled when it arose.

28. But Japanese anti-European propaganda, the dislocation and the eventual suspension of French rule during the occupation period, the action of Japan in setting up the independent state of Viet-Nam and the chaos caused by the Japanese capitulation—all these conspired to bring matters quickly to a head. Within a few days of Japan's surrender, as we have already said, the various political parties of Indo-China buried their domestic quarrels, set up a Popular Front called "Viet Mina" (a contraction of the full title "Revolutionary Alliance of the People of the South"), and, as a united body, raised the standard of revolution.

29. In September, 1945 the Republic of Viet-Nam was set up with Ho-Chi-Minh, a Moscow-trained Communist agitator and head of the Communist party in Indo-China, as first President. The new government possessed an army of a kind, partly made up of patriots and partly of bandits; its arms were obtained in a large measure from conquered or deserting Japanese troops. The country welcomed the new regime, as representing the beginning of independence; the Catholics, eager to prove that their adherence to the Christian religion did not lessen their devotion to their native land, were, in the beginning at any rate, as enthusiastic as any other section of the population. The four native bishops of the country addressed two letters to the Pope, to the whole Catholic Church and to the democratic nations of the world asking their sympathy and help for Indo-China in her struggle for independence.

30. France, although willing to grant a measure of freedom, was not willing to agree to all the demands of Viet-Nam. A desultory war began, bringing destruction and famine in its wake; it has been centered mainly in Tonkin and still continues to ravage the unhappy country. President Ho-Chi-Minh insists on an independent Republic for Annam, Tonkin and Cochin China;

France will grant a Republic, within the French Union, to Tonkin and Annam, but wishes to exclude Cochin China. Various peace overtures have been made, but the end of the quarrel does not yet appear to be in sight.

31. Of the various political parties which united to form the Popular Front known as Viet Minh, the Communists were better organized and had more funds than the others. This party soon gained control of the Revolutionary movement, and, from being a Popular Front representing all parties, Viet Minh soon became simply a Communist organization with communistic aims and methods. This development was extremely distasteful, not merely to the majority of the Catholics, but also to very many of the patriotic pagans. As a result, a new political party, which has taken to itself as its title the new name for the country, Viet-Nam, came into being. The members of this party advocate national independence but stand aloof from fighting against the French, for this they regard, and rightly, as being a struggle between France and the Communists. But the situation is complex, and just as it would probably be wrong to say that all the supporters of Viet Minh are Communists, so too it would be a mistake to consider Viet-Nam as having a monopoly of genuine patriotism.

32. The Catholic Church is suffering severely from the rebellion. Wherever Viet Minh has control, it shows itself truly communistic in its hatred for the Catholic Church. At least nine French and two native priests have been put to death by Communists, some of them after torture. Several French priests are being held as hostages by Viet Minh and in Tonkin many Church buildings are in ruins. If the Communists were to secure control of the country it seems certain that another era of persecution would begin for the Church in Indo-China.

33. It is not easy to say what the future holds in store. Persecution there may be, but the Catholics of Indo-China have faced it bravely before and there is every reason to think that, should the need arise, they will do so again. The prayers of its countless martyrs will surely protect and preserve the Church of Indo-China and, when the present storm passes, will, please God, win it a future even more glorious than its past.

2.
The Church in Siam

This Way Danger

34. When Father Julius Cesar Margico, S. J., went to Siam in 1624 with a view to preaching the Gospel and establishing the Church, he was taking on himself a task which required no small measure of bravery and grit. The history of his predecessors was not at all encouraging. Attempts to convert Siam before his time had not been many, it is true, but, such as they were, they had all ended in failure.

35. Fathers Hieronymus of the Cross and Sebastian de Cantu, Dominicans, had arrived there in 1555. They came as chaplains to 300 Portuguese troops who had landed two years earlier to serve the Siamese King, at his own request.

36. These two priests immediately went to work and in a short time established three parishes with about 1,500 converted natives.

37. The Siamese, however, as a people, were never too kindly disposed to Europeans and were easily roused to violence against them. One can scarcely blame these ignorant pagans for resenting the unscrupulous methods by which the soldiers, business men, and fortune-hunters, who made up the bulk of the foreign population, tried to swindle them. Unfortunately, more often than not, the anger of the Siamese fell on the missionaries because, first, they were less able to defend themselves and, secondly, their preaching against superstitious practices enraged the people, especially in time of disaster.

38. The two Dominican missionaries did not long survive. They were murdered by pagans in 1569. These victims of persecution were replaced by a group of their brethren which included Father John Maldonatus, who died in 1598, and Father Louis Fonseca, who was martyred in the year 1600.

39. Two Spanish Franciscans from the Philippines, Father Augustin and Brother Juan, arrived in 1583, but both were compelled to leave by sickness. Fathers Geronimo and Francisco and Brother Diego followed early in 1584, but by the end of the year war between Pegu (Burma) and Siam rendered further missionary work impossible.

Vicarious Suffering

40. Try as they would, these early missionaries found it very difficult to break down prejudice and win the people from superstition. So unsuccessful were their efforts, that a century after the introduction of Christianity into Siam there were still less than two thousand Catholics in the whole country.

41. Of all the early pioneers, Father Margico seemed most likely to make progress. He set out to win the favor of the King, and succeeded so well that in a short time he founded a Christian community which gave great promise. Things might have gone well from then on, had it not been for the insatiable greed of the merchants, which time and again brought disgrace and reprisal on the Church. Enraged at the behavior of these human parasites, the King turned against all Europeans and all Christians.

42. This change in the King's attitude was but the signal for another persecution. It was led by an apostate who had Father Margico imprisoned and poisoned. This heroic priest's death put an end to the growth of Christianity, which lay dormant for a long time to come. It was more than twenty years before any further organized attempt was made to bring Siam into the fold of Christ. Its teeming millions, of whom only a third are Siamese, the rest being made up of Chinese, Burmese, Cambodians, Laotines, Malays, Pegus, and Tamils, continued to grope in the darkness of superstition.

Godless Paradise

43. Bountiful Nature has bestowed on the Siamese a wonderfully rich country with a perpetual summer and a fertile soil. With an area as large as Spain and Portugal, bounded on the north by Tong-King and the southern states of Burma, on the east by Annam and Cambodia, on the south by the Gulf of Siam and the Malay Peninsula, and on the west by the Indian Ocean, Siam, for centuries, formed a buffer state between French and British possessions. Considering its natural fertility and warm, enervating climate, it is small wonder that Siam became known as "The Lotus Land." With a minimum of work, its natives could supply all their needs for housing, food, fire, and clothing. Arduous toil was as unnecessary at it was distasteful.

44. This life of comparative ease tended to make the Siamese an indolent, pleasure-loving people, ill disposed for receiving the seed of the Gospel or searching for religious truth. Still, they were not naturally an irreligious people, as their attachment to Buddhism shows; with the possible exception of Tibet, no other nation has been permeated so thoroughly with the tenets of Buddhism as Siam. To such an extent does it influence the people, that every young man of twenty, from the Prince down to the lowest workman, dons the yellow robe of the Buddhist monk for some months. Their concept of Buddhism, however, includes no idea of personal sacrifice or the observance of a strict moral code. Perhaps this explains, to some extent, their reluctance to embrace a Faith which demands such self-renunciation as the Catholic religion.

A New Army Pushes On

45. Twenty years after the death of Father Margico, a movement started in Europe which was to have a profound effect on the religious history of Siam. It was the foundation of the Paris Foreign Mission Society. Something has already been said about the self-sacrificing efforts of the intrepid Father de Rhodes in the single-handed campaign he carried out in Europe for the establishment of this great missionary body. Suffice it to

say here that Siam, like all countries in the Far East, owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to his indomitable courage and practical Catholicity.

46. When this newly founded Paris Foreign Mission Society assumed responsibility for the conversion of Siam in 1662, the country had become the centre of all commercial enterprise in the East, and gave shelter to several hundred Annamite and Japanese Christians. These had either been expelled from their own countries because of their religion, or chose voluntary exile because of persecution at home. Their spiritual needs were attended to by four Jesuit priests, two Dominicans, two Friars Minor, and three seculars.

47. Even before Siam had been officially entrusted to the Paris Foreign Mission Society, its ecclesiastical affairs were administered by a member of that Congregation, Monsignor Pierre de la Motte-Lambert. This missionary had been appointed Vicar-Apostolic of Cochin China, but, being unable to reach the mission assigned to him because of a persecution, he took up residence in Ayuthia, the former capital of Siam. Later, in order to escape certain claims of the Portuguese, he moved to Muhapram, a village not far distant but subject to the Dutch. It is hardly necessary to state that the *Padroado* system, which was encountered in Indo-China and Burma, was in force also in Siam, as it was in most countries of the Far East; here, as elsewhere, it had become a great obstacle to the propagation of the Faith.

48. Monsignor Lambert's administration of Siam was carried on with energy and foresight. He laid a solid foundation for the structure that was to be erected by his successors. His efforts to establish a native clergy are particularly worthy of note. He dedicated himself wholeheartedly to this task, and had the happiness of ordaining Siam's first native priests in the year 1668.

49. Five years earlier, Monsignor Pallu, Vicar Apostolic of Tong-King, and a personal friend of Monsignor Lambert, had obtained a Brief from Pope Clement IX by which the Vicariate

of Siam was entrusted to the Paris Foreign Mission Society. Monsignor Laneau was appointed Vicar Apostolic of the new Mission in 1673.

50. A request of the Paris Foreign Mission Society brought to Siam in 1670 the very successful missionary and teacher, the Franciscan Father Luis de Madre de Dios. He distinguished himself as a teacher in the mission schools of Ayuthia and Mergui. He was banished in 1688, but returned the following year. He was again captured, and died in 1689 as a result of the treatment to which he was subjected. Another Franciscan, Father John Baptist, who worked in Siam about the year 1690, had extraordinary success: he is said to have baptized about 180,000.

Politics and Religion

51. About this time a Siamese ambassador visited France, and was greatly impressed by the splendors of that great nation. He was given a most cordial welcome by Louis XIV who received him as an equal and treated him royally. This not only promoted better relations between the two countries, but it was of great benefit to the missionaries working in Siam. Phra-Narai, King of Siam, was won over to such an extent that he gave a gift of land to Monsignor Laneau as a site for a church, a house and a seminary. He gave the missionaries permission to preach the Gospel throughout the country and he dispensed his Catholic subjects from work on Sunday.

52. This was a most favorable beginning for the infant Mission, and the work of conversion was carried on fruitfully for a time. When King Phra-Narai sent a diplomatic mission to Louis XIV, and M. de Chaumont, accompanied by some priests under Fathers de Fontenay and Tachard, was appointed representative of France in Siam, the future looked very bright. It was not the destiny of Siam, however, that the Church should be allowed to grow unmolested. France, unfortunately, became involved in strife and political turmoil, and M. de Chaumont, who was a most stabilizing force in Siam, left for his own country.

53. His departure was the signal for an uprising led by a

Siamese mandarin, Phra-Phret-Racha, in which the Prime Minister was murdered, King Phra-Narai deposed, Monsignor Laneau and several missionaries imprisoned, and the Christians persecuted. For many years afterwards the history of the Church in Siam is one of fierce persecution followed by periods of comparative tranquility.

54. It was 1690 before peace and order were restored. Monsignor Laneau took up his interrupted work and was able to continue till his death in 1696. Nor was his successor, Bishop Louis of Cice, molested. But when the latter died in 1737, new troubles were brewing. The rest of the century is but a history of persecutions, those of 1729, 1755, 1764 and 1775 being the most notable. These persecutions were fomented either by local mandarines or Burmese invaders, though the kings remained, for the most part, favorably disposed towards the Missions. At one point the Siamese King appealed to Bishop Brigot for help against the Burmese invaders, whom he described as a common foe, and who destroyed Catholic property wholesale, as well as imprisoning Bishop and priests.

55. After the fall of Ayuthia to the Burmese in 1767, the missionaries with Bishop Brigot were expelled. They returned in 1768 under the patronage of the new Sovereign Phaya Thak, who gave the name Bangkok to the ancient capital. Later, however, he persecuted the Catholics because they were opposed to the superstitious rites that formed part of the Oath of Fidelity. So fierce were the persecutions during these years of terror that the Christians were reduced at one time from 12,000 to 1,000, and the clergy numbered no more than a bishop and seven native priests.

Zeal Promotes Diplomacy

56. When peace came once more to the troubled country, about 1830, new missionaries arrived and the work of conversion received a fresh impetus. In 1834 Monsignor Courvezy was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Siam. He was succeeded in 1840 by Monsignor Pallegoix, one of the most outstanding leaders the

Church in Siam has ever had. Apart from his literary work and his unstinted efforts on behalf of the Siamese, he promoted and developed a most successful apostolate among the Laotines.

57. He saw clearly, as others before him had seen, that the greatest obstacle to the spread of the Church in Siam was the ever-recurring threat of persecution. Granted that the Siamese were by no means easy to influence even under the most favorable circumstances, he felt that if permanent peace were assured, the Church would make headway. He was convinced, too, that the best contribution to lasting peace would be a better understanding between France and Siam. With this thought in mind, he induced Napoleon III to make a new alliance with Siam and to establish proper diplomatic relations by setting up an embassy in Bangkok. In 1856 King Mongkut signed a treaty with France by which he renewed the privileges which the missionaries had been granted by Phra-Narai in the 17th century.

58. The gifted and zealous Bishop Pallegoix succeeded in gaining the esteem of all with whom he came in contact. The King himself was so impressed by his learning and virtue that he attended the saintly Prelate's funeral in person and accepted from the missionaries, as a token of friendship, the dead Bishop's ring.

59. From now on, the peace of the Church was undisturbed, if one excepts the brief interval in 1894 when some local mandarins, as a result of friction with France, vented their anger on the missionaries. Even then, the Foreign Minister promised that no harm would come to the Church through the French invasion.

60. The Mission in Laos was separated from Siam in 1899 and erected into a Vicariate Apostolic. Later, in 1925, the growth of the Church in Siam induced the Holy See to establish the five Siamese provinces of the peninsula of Malacca as a separate district to be known as the Prefecture Apostolic of Rajaburi. This new Mission was entrusted to the Salesian Fathers. In 1944 a new district in the southeast, Chanthaburi, was erected as a Vicariate under the direction of a native Vicar, Bishop Cheng.

61. Though Siam has gone through many political changes in recent years, it still adheres to its original form of government by monarchy. The emphasis at present, though, is on the idea of a limited monarchy after the fashion of Britain. Absolute monarchial rule has gone, and a constitutional government has been established.

62. These changes were not effected without some political upheaval. King Prajadhipok abdicated, and the boy-prince Ananda Mahidol, who was then studying in Switzerland, was raised to the throne in 1935. He was yet hardly ten years of age. His reign was brief and ended dramatically on June 9, 1946, with a fatal, mysterious bullet. The throne then passed on to his brother, Phumiphon Aduldet, a young man of seventeen who was also a student in Switzerland. After the enthronement, the young monarch returned to Europe to finish his education.

63. For a brief space the Siamese decided to call their country "Thailand," meaning "The Land of the Free." The change in name, however, was not accompanied by any notable advance in freedom. If anything, the people were less free during these years than they had been for generations, for totalitarianism took root and flourished for a while.

64. Thailand was occupied by the Japanese army during the war and was induced by force of pressure to declare war on Britain and the U. S. A. This action found little support among the people, who resented the presence of Japanese troops and who gave as little cooperation as possible to the establishment of Japanese aims. After Japan surrendered, the war-time leaders of Thailand were ousted, peace was made with the Allies, and the name "Siam" was restored to the country.

65. Though foreigners living in Siam are compelled to pay a yearly tax for permission to remain in the country, the Government is on friendly terms with the Church. Indeed, the tax is probably directed not so much against Europeans, who form an

insignificant percentage of the population, as against immigration from neighboring states.

66. Missionaries are permitted to establish schools and, provided the standard of secular education is satisfactory, it is a matter of indifference to the Government whether religious instruction is given or not. Though the Siamese are difficult to influence and are very much attached to the national religion of Buddhism, which is the greatest obstacle to the spread of Catholicism, they are naturally a friendly people once their diffidence has been dispelled. The work of conversion is progressing surely, if slowly. The total number of Catholics, which is less than fifty thousand, is not impressive, but it was increasing before the war at the rate of about eight hundred a year.

67. What does the future hold for Siam? Will the Government remain friendly to the Church or will it incline towards Communism? Will the enlightenment of education help to lead the people away from superstition and dispose them to accept Christian principles? Will the task of the missionary be easier in the future than it has been in the past? Who can say!

3.

The Church in British Malaya

68. South of the Kingdom of Siam, the Continent of Asia stretches a long narrow finger almost to the equator. This territory, with the island of Singapore and some other less important islands, has long been known as British Malaya. Its geographical position has given it, in the world of commerce, an importance dating back for at least seven hundred years. When the Portuguese came on the scene in the early 16th century, Malacca, on the west coast, was one of the great trading marts of the East; as such it had a great appeal to European traders, and about 1511 the town became a Portuguese possession. So it remained until 1641 when the Dutch took it from Portugal. After changing hands several times, Malacca finally became a British possession in 1824, and as the 19th century progressed, England obtained control of the entire country. The Japanese occupation of 1942-1945 wrested the territory temporarily from British rule, but the defeat of Japan restored England to her former place in the peninsula.

69. For some time there had been in Malaya a movement towards independence, and in February, 1948 England gave some recognition to this movement by reorganizing the government of Malaya on lines that point in the direction of ultimate autonomy. The new Malayan Federation, as it is called, unites all the country, with the exception of Singapore, under a single government.

70. The total population is close to 6,000,000. Chinese immigrants number about two and a half million, and are mostly Confucian Buddhists. The Malays, something over two million strong, were converted to Mohammedanism between the 13th and 15th centuries. The remainder of the population is composed of some aboriginal tribes, Indians (mostly Hindus), Eurasians, and 20,000 Europeans.

Catholic History

71. The Portuguese established themselves at Malacca in 1511 and it can be assumed that from that time onwards some attempt was made to found Christianity there. St. Francis Xavier stayed for several short periods in this city, his body was buried there for some little time in an old church whose walls still remain. In 1557 Malacca was set up as a diocese. Franciscans and Dominicans appear to have made considerable progress up to 1641 when the arrival of the Dutch was followed by a severe persecution which largely destroyed whatever had been achieved. For the next 200 years very little missionary work was done in Malaya. In 1838 the Diocese of Malacca was suppressed and the territory was placed under the care of adjacent Vicariates.

72. In 1841, however, it again became an independent mission confided to the care of the Paris Foreign Missionaries. But even as late as 1875 missionary work was still confined to Singapore, Penang and Malacca. In the last quarter of the 19th century, however, as the English proceeded to penetrate the interior of the country, missionaries followed in their wake. The Malays remained, and still remain, staunch Mohammedans, but a considerable number of converts was made among the other sections of the people. In 1888 the Diocese of Malacca was set up once more, it is a suffragan see to Pondicherry, but two churches, one in Malacca and one in Singapore, are under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Macao in China. This anomaly, a relic of the *Padroado* system, we need not discuss in detail here. The cathedral town of the Diocese is no longer Malacca but Singapore.

73. During the past sixty years the Church has made substantial progress. In 1878 there were only 7,000 Catholics in Malaya. In 1933 the figure stood at 65,000, and at the present time the total Catholic population is estimated at 80,000; these belong, almost without exception, to the non-Malayan sections of the people. The Diocese is still confided to the Paris Foreign Missionaries. Native vocations are fairly numerous; in 1939 there were twenty-one native Priests, forty-four native Brothers, and a hundred and seven native Sisters.

74. We may mention that the most famous ecclesiastical seminary in the East, generally known as the "Seminary of the Martyrs," was transferred from India to Penang in 1809 and still flourishes there. The De La Salle Brothers and the Dames of St. Maur have been engaged in educational work in Malaya for nearly a hundred years; they now have splendid schools in the principal towns, the largest of these having a roll-call of 2,000 pupils. Government support for schools is generous. In more recent times the Redemptorist Fathers, the Gabrielist Brothers, Good Shepherd and Carmelite Sisters, and the Little Sisters of the Poor have taken up work in this field.

75. The Japanese invasion, of course, brought missionary work almost to a standstill, but now that it has passed there is every reason to hope that progress in the future will be at least equal to that of the past sixty years.

4.

The Church in Burma

Breaking the Ground

76. There is some indication that Christianity was introduced into Burma before the coming of the Portuguese at the end of the 15th century. Whether the evidence is conclusive or not, so little was accomplished in those early days that it had no effect on the subsequent evangelization of the country and must be regarded merely as a matter of historic interest outside the scope of such a paper as this. We must, therefore, abandon unexplored the uncertain terrain of speculation and proceed to the sure ground of history.

77. After Goa had been founded as the capital of Portuguese, India and the important trading center of Malacca on the western coast of the Malayan Peninsula had been added to Portuguese possessions. Pope Leo X entered into a concordat with the King of Portugal whereby the King was granted the privilege of appointing bishops in all the new possessions of Portugal in the East, the King guaranteeing to keep his dominions supplied with missionaries and to provide endowments for their churches and institutions. This was the system of ecclesiastical administration known as the *Padroado* which has already been explained in these pages. By virtue of it, the Bishop of Mylapore (Madras) claimed jurisdiction over any churches founded or to be founded in Burma.

78. The conversion of Burma was first entrusted to the Dominicans. It is certain that some missionaries were sent out to

the new mission, for there is definite proof that a priest was present at the signing of a treaty between the King of Pegu's Viceroy and a representative of the King of Portugal. It is understandable, however, that the Dominicans could not spare many priests for this work. The few that were assigned to the territory settled, most likely, in the port towns where the sprinkling of foreigners would form the nucleus of a Church. Of their labors, however, little or nothing is known. Our earliest definite and reliable records are furnished by Franciscan missionaries.

The Laborers Are Few

79. In 1555 Father Peter Bonfer, a Franciscan, left Mylapore for the Kingdom of Pegu. There, the record tells us, he was met by the pastor and a Father Alphonse Cyprian of his own Order; we gather from the wording that the pastor was not a Franciscan. Father Bonfer embarked for Cosmin, the modern Bassein, where he remained two and a half years learning the language and customs, and trying to make converts. Among the inhabitants, "some made light of his teachings, others despised them, and there were some who felt greatly offended. In a word, he found the hearts of the inhabitants so obstinate that he saw no possible means of doing anything." We may blame the chronicler for adding: "Seeing that, on the one hand, he was losing his time preaching to the Pegusians, and, on the other, that he was in danger of being killed by them, he shook the dust from his feet for a testimony of the obstinacy of the inhabitants and of the impending misfortunes upon them." After his departure in 1557 some of the Portuguese Christians continued his efforts to spread the Faith among the people, but they were mercilessly tortured and they abandoned the attempt.

80. From the casual and almost contemptuous references to "the Portuguese priest of the town" in various records, we may conclude that, during the next century or so, there was a priest in charge of each port town where there was a Portuguese trading colony. They belonged usually to one or other of the Religious Orders and, though called Portuguese because they came under

the *Padroado* system, they were recruited in India. There is no great record of accomplishment during the period. The number of missionaries was too small, and the time was not yet ripe for mass conversion.

Apostles in Chains

81. Indeed, until the *Padroado* system was abolished, little progress was made in the conversion of Burma. We read of individual missionaries flitting across the pages of her religious history. Some were martyred; some forced to leave; some captured by invading armies from neighboring states. It was a time of political struggle and and internecine strife. The Portuguese government, which had undertaken responsibility for the conversion of Burma and the other countries in the Far East which were considered to be in its sphere of influence, was helpless to deal with the situation.

82. An Augustinian named Father Augustine de Jesus gave a report on the state of Ava in 1635. Ava was one of the warring kingdoms that made up Burma. In 1613 the King of Ava had invaded and overcome Pegu. He brought back to Ava many captives and slaves, among whom was Father de Fonseca and Father Diego Nunes, both Jesuits. We must pass over in silence, for lack of space, the sufferings of these two heroic priests in captivity. That they were allowed to do a certain amount of missionary work is evident. It is probably for this reason that Father Augustine de Jesus was able to record, what he probably heard from an eye witness, that in Ava there were "more than four thousand Christians, all of whom had been taken prisoners at the fortress of Syriam." These figures, like all second-hand accounts, are probably exaggerated. In 1639 Father da Fonseca wrote to his superior asking him to send another priest, so that Father da Fonseca himself might retire to India and die among his comrades. It was twenty-six years since he had seen a brother priest.

83. Of what went on in Burma for the rest of the century little enough is known. Sporadic attempts were made by heroic

individuals to plant the seed of the Gospel. The land was blessed with martyrs, but the great mass of the people remained stubborn. Fathers Joret and Genoud, who arrived in Burma in 1692, suffered martyrdom the following year. They were captured, stripped naked, sewn up in sacks, and thrown in the river. So fierce were the persecutions at this time that we know of only one priest, an Indian Franciscan, in the whole of Burma at the turn of the century. With the disappearance of the *Padroado* system, things improved in Burma, but anxious days still lay ahead and permanent peace was, as yet, a long way off.

Mission Changes Hands

84. When two new missionaries arrived in 1723 they were kindly received by the King, who allowed them to preach without molestation. A vicariate was established in 1742 and was entrusted to the Barnabites. A change, however, had come about in the meantime. The Barnabites arrived only to find the country in a state of anarchy and revolution. After the restoration of peace, there followed a fruitful period of missionary activity. Father Nerini, one of the best known of the missionaries, carried on a most successful apostolate. For a time the missionaries were well received and were able to conduct religious services without giving the slightest offense to pagans. But there was still trouble ahead, for after a raid by the Dutch on Syriam, which is 412 miles from Rangoon, in 1745 a plot to murder all foreigners was hatched in Burma. The Bishop and most of his priests were killed in the jungle. Father Nerini escaped, returned four years later, and continued his work single-handed until he was beheaded in 1754.

85. From this time until the Paris Foreign Mission Society accepted responsibility for Burma, disaster followed disaster. In 1800 the number of Catholics had been reduced from five to three thousand; in 1824, during the first Burmese war with England, the existing Catholic churches were destroyed by natives; in 1830 there were only two priests left for the whole Burmese mission. Nor were any new Barnabite missionaries available.

The Order had its principal houses in Austria where, owing to insane persecution by the Emperor Joseph II, it was short of priests and funds.

86. Thereupon, the Mission was entrusted to the Oblates of Turin. Unfortunately, their arrival in Burma was followed by another war. The pagan natives, as usual, attacked the Catholics and burned their buildings to the ground. And as if this were not enough, the Oblates had another cross to bear. In Europe it was the turn of the Sardinian government to persecute the Religious Orders by way of bettering man's condition. The Oblates suffered heavily, their resources being considerably diminished and the number of students in their colleges decreased.

87. When the Paris Foreign Mission Society accepted the Burmese Vicariate in 1856, its priests found the mission in ruins, and had to begin all over again. Churches, presbyteries and schools had all been destroyed. Nothing remained but a band of 5,000 Catholics.

88. A new era now dawned for the Church in Burma, an era of success in spreading the Faith which has lasted to the present time. The advances made by the Burmese Mission can be judged from the fact that in 1856 there were 5,000 Catholics and a hand-full of priests, while in 1933 there were 121,000 Catholics with ninety-six foreign priests and sixty-six native.

War Hits the Missions

89. Like so many other countries, Burma was left a legacy of destruction and want by the recent war. When the Japanese came in February, 1942 with mastery of the air and troops in abundance, the British and Chinese armies, seeing that they were helpless to stop the invading hordes, retreated towards India, applying the scorched earth policy, as they went, with ruthless vigor. The Japanese themselves lent a hand by bombarding Burmese towns from the air. Rangoon suffered relatively slight damage, but Lashio and Mandalay were largely destroyed. Of 40,000 homeless refugees in Burma some four thousand perished

during the early years of the war. When the day of liberation came in 1945 it dawned on a ruined and desolate Burma.

90. During the war the missions suffered badly. Practically all missionaries were interned. Two new districts which had been entrusted to the Foreign Missions of Milan and St. Columban's Foreign Mission Society were practically without priests for the whole war. Even French and Italian priests were regarded by the Japanese with suspicion; so much so, that in 1943 nearly all missionaries were forced into internment, leaving the country to native priests, secular and Religious, who acquitted themselves with great credit during the emergency. When victory finally came to the Allies, 120 priests and Religious of North Burma were in internment in Mandalay.

91. As a result of the war, nearly all mission property was completely destroyed or severely damaged; and, so far, no effectual means of restoring it has been discovered. The occupying armies, struck by the crying needs of the missionaries and their wonderful cheerfulness in the face of disaster, have contributed most generously to the Missions. One officer has organized, with the assistance of Cardinal Griffin, a "Save the Church in Burma" fund. Under his direction, Catholic, Protestant, Mussulman, and Hindu soldiers worked together at Toungoo to restore the Catholic cathedral. It will take many years, however, to replace what has been lost in the way of churches, schools, and houses; in the meantime there is greater need for them than ever before. The Baptists have lost, to a great extent, the influence they wielded before the war, and more and more pagans are streaming into the Catholic Church. Here is a great opportunity if our missionaries can find the material resources to take advantage of it.

Freedom a Doubtful Blessing

92. Emerging from its state of subservience to Britain, Burma has just assumed the role of "independent republic." It had been brought under the dominion of England, piece by piece, until in 1886 it was annexed to the colony of India. In 1935 Burma

separated from India and was given a new Constitution by the British parliament by which it was endowed with a considerable degree of autonomy. The legitimate aspirations of the Burmese towards complete independence were not to be denied, however. When a request to this effect was brought to England in 1942 by Uaung Saw and rejected, the refusal strengthened considerably the position of a group of young advanced nationalists who had received a promise of complete independence from the Japanese in return for the cooperation of Burma in the war. This group organized an army and fought on the side of the Japanese until, disillusioned as to the real aims of Japan in Burma and foreseeing, probably, that the end of the war would find Burma backing the loser, Uaung Saw and the other leaders quickly reversed their position and stood by the Allies until victory came. After much negotiation with the British, the country finally was declared an independent republic on June 10, 1947.

93. The new Constitution of the Republic was formed on democratic principles, and, amongst other things, it guarantees religious freedom. There is some evidence that the Government has socialistic tendencies, but it is too early yet to say whether the Church will be affected by them. The British Government gave a subsidy to Catholic and other denominational schools which has now been withdrawn in favor of free state schools. This will put an additional drain on the slender resources of the missionaries, if they wish to retain their own schools, as they are permitted to do by law. If, on the other hand, they wish to take advantage of the state grant, they must surrender complete control to the Government, even to the extent of the nomination and appointment of teachers.

94. Catholic schools have such prestige in Burma at present that it is felt the Burmese will patronize them in preference to state schools, if they continue to function. The Catholic school in Burma is the best medium for bringing the Faith to the people. It must not be allowed to perish.

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Study Outline

Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.

Part I. Paragraphs 1-26

Asia, the cradle of Christianity, has never, as a continent, accepted Christ. Yet for centuries it has been the scene of missionary endeavor. It must be said that only partial success has been achieved. Only the Philippine Islands brighten the picture. They are Christian. And second to them is French Indo-China.

Though attempts had been made to preach Christianity in Indo-China in 1572, 1582 and 1615, it was not until the arrival of the Jesuit Alexander de Rhodes that the cause of Christ advanced. In the early 17th century he entered the country at the head of ten Jesuits, and in a few years six thousand converts entered the Church. Persecution soon followed.

In 1649 Father de Rhodes arrived in Rome to plead the cause of the missions of the Far East. His address to Pope Innocent I is notable, for it was a factor in changing the missionary technique of the Church. Two things were stressed in Father de Rhodes' address: the obstacles placed in the path of missionary progress by the Portuguese Right of Patronage, and the imperative need of native clergy and bishops in pagan lands.

Going from Rome to Paris to stir up mission interest, Father de Rhodes met a French priest, Francois Palhu, who was destined to change the missionary methods of the Church. It was due to him that Vicars Apostolic were appointed to mission fields. The first field they entered was Indo-China.

Questions

How successful has missionary endeavor been on the continent of Asia?

What is the proportional Catholic population in China and Japan?

After the Philippines what is the largest Catholic Asiatic group?

What was the result of Father de Rhodes' apostolate in Indo-China?

Explain the importance of Father de Rhodes' address to Pope Innocent I.

How did Father Francois Pallu contribute to the mission cause?

What mission field did the first Vicars-Apostolic enter?

What was the origin of the Paris Foreign Mission Society?

In the 19th century persecution raged in Indo-China. Why?

What is the present position of the Church in Indo-China?

Part 2. Paragraphs 27-57

Father Julius Cesar Margico pioneered in Siam in 1624. Two Dominicans had preceded him. They were martyred in 1569. Father Margico won the King's favor and his mission endeavor might have gone well had the European merchants not outraged the natives by their greed. The King turned against all Christians and persecution set in. Father Margico was poisoned. His death ended Christianity in Siam for more than twenty years.

The Siamese are indolent but not irreligious as their attachment to Buddhism shows. But the self-discipline called for in Christianity makes little appeal to them.

In 1662 the Paris Foreign Mission Society entered the mission field of Siam. By that time Siam had become the centre of all commercial enterprise in the East. The Padroado system was in force in Siam, and as elsewhere it interfered with mission progress. Under Msgr. Lambert, Vicar-Apostolic, religion advanced and the first native priests were ordained in 1668.

A Siamese diplomatic mission from the King of Siam to Louis XIV of France ushered in a period of peace. However, persecution broke out again and continued intermittently until the middle of the 19th century. At the present time the work of conversion is progressing slowly but surely. The total number of Catholics is less than fifty thousand. Before the war it was increasing at the rate of about eight hundred annually.

Questions

Who was the pioneer missioner to Siam and what did he accomplish?
How did the European traders affect mission progress?
After a century of mission endeavor what was Siam's Catholic population?
Siam is called The Lotus Land. Explain.
What is the big obstacle to Siamese conversion?
How did the Paris Foreign Mission Society affect Siam's religious history?
Describe the apostolate of Msgr. de la Motte-Lambert.
When did persecution finally cease in Siam?
What did Msgr. Pallegoix accomplish in the 19th century?
What is the present situation of the Church in Siam?

Part 3. Paragraphs 58-84

For the last 200 years very little missionary work has been done in Malaya. The Malays are Mohammendans but a number of converts have been made from other groups in Malayan territory. During the last sixty years the Church has made substantial progress. At present there are twenty-one native priests, forty-four native brothers and one hundred and seven native sisters in a Catholic population of 80,000.

Until the Padroado system was abolished little progress was made in the conversion of Burma. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century the path of the missionaries in Burma was a bloody one. When the Paris Foreign Mission Society took over the Burma field in 1856 the mission was in ruins. Nothing remained but a band of five thousand Catholics. Since that time the Church has grown. In 1933 there were 121,000 Catholics with sixty-six native priests and ninety-six foreign priests. The war wrought great havoc in Burma. A tremendous task faces the Church in the newly established Republic of Burma.

Questions

What progress was made in the first 200 years of the Malayan mission?
What is the religion of the Malays?
Where is the most famous missionary seminary in the East?
What is the present state of the Church in Malaya?
Explain the ecclesiastical system known as the Padroado.
Describe Father Nerini's apostolate in Burma.
What did the Paris Foreign Mission Society find in Burma in 1856?
How had the Church advanced up to 1933?
How did the war affect the Burma mission?
What is the present outlook for mission progress in Burma?

A Note on the Author

The Rev. Gerard Marinan was born September 24, 1908 in Glenarm, Co. Antrim, Ireland. Educated at Glenarm National School 1912—1923; St. Malachy's College, Belfast, 1923—1926; St. Columban's College, Delgan Park, Galway, 1926—1933. Ordained December 21, 1932. Korea, September 1933. Pastor in Kwoshu, Zenra Nan do 1934—1936. Procurator and Prefect's secretary 1936—1939. Transferred from Prefecture of Kwoshu to Prefecture of Shunsen 1939. Vice-Pro-Director 1939—1941. U. S. A. 1941. Los Angeles 1941—1945. Bristol, R. I., 1945—1947. Elected member of Superior General's Council 1947. Secretary to Superior General and Chapter 1947.

The study outline and questions for "The Church in the Smaller Asiatic Lands," were formulated by Gerald C. Treacy, S.J., who has prepared study club editions of various encyclicals.

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